



## Wyoming Department of Education

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### MEMORANDUM NO. 2009-143

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Principals  
Curriculum Directors  
Bridges Summer School Coordinators

**FROM:** Joe Simpson, Deputy Superintendent 

**DATE:** September 18, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Change to Summer 2010 Wyoming Bridges Grant Requirements  
for Student Assessment

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### IMPORTANT AND TIME-SAVING INFORMATION

As you are aware, the Wyoming Legislature has funded summer school and extended day programs for academically at-risk students now for five years. The Wyoming Bridges Grant Program was begun as a collaborative effort of Wyoming teachers and administrators working with analysts who had researched effective summer school practices. This group of educators then made recommendations to the Wyoming legislature to provide funding for summer school and extended day programs which were designed to be as successful by incorporating these effective practices into Grant requirements.

Indeed, the Bridges Grant program has met some of the expectations originally anticipated. In 2008 the program was recognized nationally by Johns Hopkins University's Center for Summer Learning for its outstanding summer learning opportunities. The Legislature showed further support for the program in 2008 when lawmakers statutorily established the grant under W.S. 21-13-334.

Over time, administration of the Bridges Grant has continued to move toward excellence, making available professional development opportunities for staff, inaugurating site monitoring visits, and beginning a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of summer school programs. Each year since the inception of the grant, annual reports to legislators have emphasized that the absence of a uniform assessment used by all districts across the state prohibited a thorough analysis of program effectiveness. As monitoring visits have further emphasized, districts struggle with analyzing the success of their summer school programs, and only a few can definitively point to student data or the use of that data as an informant of how their summer programs are designed or delivered. The majority of districts which have successfully used data to help direct their programs use Northwest Education Association's (NWEA)

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Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP). Additionally, MAP district assessment data has also been used in the pilot project undertaken last year to analyze the effectiveness of summer school programs, and this data has proven to be a valuable tool.

The Department believes the Legislature has voiced its intention that the Bridges Grant be highly accountable when it directed the Department under W.S.21-13-334 (h)(iv) to implement a structured common assessment evaluation of program effectiveness. Given our experience with MAP data under the auspices of the pilot assessment program already undertaken, **the Department will require, effective with Bridges Grants for the summer of 2010, that all districts electing to utilize these grant funds must use MAP student assessment data to meet the Grant's requirement for student pre/post assessment reporting.**

For the purposes of the Bridges Grant, spring MAP data will be used for student pre-program assessment information, and fall MAP data will be used for student post-program assessment information. This will allow districts and policymakers to look at student growth over the time period, rather than assessing whether students have met described proficiencies over the time period. Spring and fall raw RIT score data from 2<sup>nd</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades will be submitted directly to the Department or its designee for analysis; districts will be instructed on the details of this requirement as it is more timely. The reporting of the MAP data to the WDE will become effective beginning in the spring of 2010.

We realize that not all Wyoming school districts are yet utilizing NWEA's MAP for local student assessment, but understand that the vast majority are doing so. For districts either not yet using MAP locally or for those who administer MAP only during the spring or only during the fall, the Bridges application upcoming in the spring of 2010 will require a letter of commitment that the district is moving in the direction of administering this assessment to students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

We look forward to working with districts in this endeavor to achieve the highest levels of accountability to our many constituents. Please direct questions to Ruth Sommers at [somm8@bresnan.net](mailto:somm8@bresnan.net) or 307-632-0157 or Laurel Ballard at [lballa@educ.state.wy.us](mailto:lballa@educ.state.wy.us) or 307-777-7016.

JS/LB:al